

2. PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) evaluates alternatives for building and operating the Green Line, a 14-mile monorail line in Seattle, Washington. The project is being proposed by the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority (also known as Seattle Monorail Project or SMP), which is a city transportation authority organized under Washington Revised Code Chapter 35.95A.

This Final EIS provides updates, clarifications, and further analysis to a Draft EIS that was released by SMP and the U.S. Coast Guard on August 29, 2003. The Final EIS includes a number of components:

- Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Volume 1A provide updated text (and figures and maps as needed) for each substantive section of the Draft EIS, present analysis of updated and refined alternatives, and present a Preferred Alternative, which is the SMP staff's recommendation for the Green Line's alignment and station locations (also called the Final Staff Recommendation, or FSR).
- Chapter 5 in Volume 1A presents a Mitigation Program that discusses mitigation measures to date SMP has committed to for the Preferred Alternative.
- Chapter 6 in Volume 1A presents a summary of the comments that were received from members of the public, businesses, community organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies on the Draft EIS.
- Final EIS Appendices in Volumes 1B, 2, 3, and 4 supplement appendices from the Draft EIS to provide updated and refined drawings, maps, and technical information and, in addition, present background information on the single beam configuration, updated design drawings, and updated visual simulations showing areas of the Preferred Alternative to supplement the simulations that were presented in the Draft EIS.
- Draft EIS comments are contained in full in Volumes 5 and 6, along with responses to each comment.

The Green Line is proposed to use traditional monorail¹ technology, which would consist of linked train cars straddling an elevated guideway beam that provides electric power to run the vehicle. Green Line trains would run on rubber tires that are locked onto the beam and would be operated automatically and not require drivers.

The proposed 14-mile-long Green Line would be constructed in City of Seattle public right-of-way and on separate right-of-way that would be acquired by the SMP. The Green Line would serve a number of Seattle communities and destinations, including the Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square, Downtown retail core, Ferry Terminal, King Street Station, Seattle Center, Key Arena, Safeco Field, Seahawks Stadium, Belltown, Queen Anne, Interbay, South Downtown (SODO), Ballard, and West Seattle.

The Green Line is being planned as an independent, stand-alone project and is proposed in accordance with Seattle Citizens' Petition No. 1, which was passed by Seattle voters in November 2002. In Petition No. 1, voters adopted the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan (also known as the ETC Plan or the Seattle Popular Transit Plan), created the SMP, required the SMP to adopt and implement the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan, and authorized funding for the construction and operation of the Green Line as described in the Plan. The Seattle Popular Monorail Plan, which was adopted in August 2002 by the Elevated

¹ A monorail is a form of elevated street railway mass transit use.

Transportation Company (ETC), was based on analysis of corridor alternatives for a citywide monorail system and route alternatives for the Green Line that were contained in the Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS.

Under Petition No. 1, SMP only has the authority and financing to proceed with the Green Line as it was described in the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan approved by the voters. The alternative alignments and station locations discussed in detail in this Final EIS, except for the No Action Alternative, all conform to the Green Line description in the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan. Alternatives that do not conform to that Green Line description with respect to the technology to be used, the general route to be followed, or the general vicinities of station locations are not evaluated in the EIS because the SMP does not have authority or funding to pursue such alternatives without voter approval. Prior environmental review and planning evaluated an extensive array of alignment, station location, and technology alternatives. See Sections 2.3, 2.5, and Draft EIS Appendix C, Summary of Previous Environmental Documentation, for more information.

Following the approval of Petition No. 1, SMP conducted additional technical review and engaged community members to begin developing detailed alignment and station alternatives for the Green Line along the route adopted as part of the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan. As part of this effort, on January 7, 2003, the SMP announced its intent to prepare an EIS, as required by Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Because the Green Line proposes a new bridge crossing of the Lake Washington Ship Canal (near the existing Ballard Bridge), a bridge permit from the U. S. Coast Guard and environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are required. The Green Line also proposes modifications of the existing high-rise West Seattle Bridge, which may need a bridge permit from the U. S. Coast Guard. The SMP, as the SEPA lead agency, and the U. S. Coast Guard, as the NEPA lead agency, have agreed to prepare this joint EIS to satisfy the requirements of both SEPA and NEPA. The U. S. Coast Guard issued a Notice of Intent to publish a NEPA environmental impact statement [Federal Register: March 25, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 57) (Notices, p. 14422)].

2.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Green Line is to develop a monorail mass transit facility consistent with Phase One of the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan as adopted by the City of Seattle voters in Citizens' Petition No. 1 in November 2002. The Green Line would provide a safe, speedy, and reliable transportation alternative to travel on congested city streets and highways through a grade-separated mass transit system that would allow passengers to travel efficiently above the traffic on the streets below.

The proposal for the Green Line grew from Seattle's need for better ways to link neighborhoods and provide easy mobility to places people live, work, and play. As proposed, it would provide high-quality, clean-powered public transportation that is rooted in Seattle's past and yet would support development consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Planning for the Green Line has been based on adopted City and regional land use and transportation plans as well as on the expressed desires of Seattle citizens. As traffic congestion in Seattle worsened during the 1990s, both Seattle citizens and the City of Seattle government explored options to provide increased mobility and an alternative to congestion (see Section 4.1, Transportation, for more information on traffic conditions).

The City's response to traffic congestion levels was to initiate the Seattle Transit Initiative and its Intermediate Capacity Transit Study. The study, which was conducted in partnership with Sound Transit, King County Metro, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the ETC, was based on the following findings about local and regional transit needs:

- In-city transit alternatives were needed not only to enhance mobility within Seattle neighborhoods, but also to increase accessibility around the region and between outlying communities and Seattle's retail and employment core.
- Sound Transit's planned light rail project would provide north-south service, but necessitated a reexamination of enhancements and improvements needed to the existing local service network to ensure coordination and citywide service.
- Existing bus service within many specific corridors in the city was already being provided at maximum practical capacity, even as demand for transit services continued to increase. Future demand would not be adequately addressed by existing types of service, and transit modes evaluated should be those that would not need to operate in traffic (*Seattle Transit Study for Intermediate Capacity Transit*, City of Seattle strategic planning office, November 2000).

With these findings as a basis and with study of neighborhood plans, transit routes and service levels, and congestion levels, the Intermediate Capacity Transit Study identified five corridors (out of a total of 47 routes that were studied) as feasible for intermediate-capacity transit. Three of these corridors were Lake City to Northgate to Ballard, Ballard to Downtown Seattle, and West Seattle to Downtown Seattle. Each of these corridors was found to present unique characteristics that suggested the need for higher-capacity transit than was already being provided by existing transit modes. At the same time, Seattle citizens, through Initiatives 41 and 53, asked City government to consider monorail to meet in-city intermediate-capacity transit needs. Monorail was proposed as a way to provide safe, speedy, reliable mobility that would provide an alternative to congested streets by operating on an elevated guideway that was separated from the roadway.

Seattle's own successful Seattle Center Monorail, which has a 40-year history of operating efficiently within the Downtown core, as well as the experience of cities in Asia, Australia, and Europe that had implemented monorail as a cost-effective, reliable transit mode, recommended monorail as a viable transit option. In addition, monorail's elevated guideway would enable the system to operate primarily within the public right-of-way, minimizing land use impacts in already-developed neighborhoods.

The citizens' initiatives created the ETC to investigate the potential of monorail as an in-city, intermediate-capacity transit mode and to evaluate potential corridors for monorail based on citywide land use patterns and mobility needs. The ETC conducted a several-year planning process that included extensive citizen consultation and exploratory visits to functioning monorail systems around the world. The ETC's geographic evaluation was focused around the five corridors that had been identified by the City's Intermediate Capacity Transit Study.

Following its analysis, the ETC concluded that monorail could be cost-effective to construct and viable to operate in Seattle and recommended a five-line, citywide monorail system that would be initiated with the Green Line, which would incorporate portions of two of the seven recommended intermediate-capacity transit corridors. Potential routes along the Green Line corridor were evaluated during 2002 in the Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS, which led to the selection of a general monorail route that was submitted to Seattle voters in November 2002 and approved for implementation.

This analysis was continued over the course of 2003 through an extensive community involvement process as well as detailed engineering, environmental, operational, and design work. In August 2003, SMP published a Draft EIS that was prepared jointly by SMP and the U.S. Coast Guard and that analyzed alternatives for alignments and station locations for the Green Line.

During the 45-day comment period, which ran from August 29 to October 14 following publication of the Draft EIS, SMP and the Coast Guard received letters and e-mails from the public and from federal, state,

and local agencies with expertise in the issues analyzed in the EIS. Written and oral comments were also received during a public hearing on the Green Line Draft EIS that was held on September 29, 2003 in the Seattle Center Northwest Rooms. The comments received, and responses to those comments, are included in Volumes 5 and 6 of this Final EIS. A summary of comments is included in Chapter 6 in Volume 1A.

The U. S. Coast Guard will review for approval the Green Line's proposed monorail-only bridge over the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the crossing of the Duwamish Waterway. The Coast Guard has determined that the scope of the Coast Guard's NEPA review should include the entire 14-mile Green Line, so that all indirect or cumulative effects of the Coast Guard's permitting action can be fully considered.

2.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

SMP's proposal to construct and operate the Green Line grew out of several Seattle citizens' initiatives, beginning in 1997, and a number of years of study, analysis, and community involvement by the ETC, the SMP's predecessor agency, to evaluate alternative corridors and routes for a monorail system.

But even before those citizens' initiatives, monorail has long been part of Seattle's history. In 1962, Seattle built the country's first full-scale monorail system for the Seattle "Century 21" World's Fair, a 1.2-mile line between Downtown Seattle and the Seattle Center. The system carried nearly eight million riders in its first six months and earned back its construction costs in just five months. Four decades later, the system is still in operation, one of very few transit systems to support operations without a subsidy.

As transportation needs increased in Seattle and the surrounding region, both local and regional comprehensive plans emphasized the need for a multimodal transportation system that would encourage transit, walking, and bicycling as alternatives to the automobile. Seattle citizens, through the initiative process, began exploring monorail as a potential mode of transit that could provide an alternative to traffic congestion.

In 1997, monorail supporters launched Initiative 41, which proposed an X-shaped, 40-mile citywide monorail system. The initiative passed with 53 percent voter approval and created the ETC, which was formed as a Public Development Authority to plan the monorail system.

In summer 2000, however, the Seattle City Council repealed Initiative 41 and disbanded the ETC. In response, citizen activists and volunteers launched a second citizens' monorail proposal, Initiative 53. That initiative, which was approved by Seattle voters in November 2000, provided the ETC with \$6 million and two years to create a plan for a Seattle monorail system. Initiative 53 specifically required the ETC to propose a specific plan and funding for an initial monorail line to be considered by Seattle voters.

The result of the ETC's planning effort was the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan, produced as a draft in April 2002 and then, after refinements and revisions, adopted by the organization in August 2002 for submission to the voters in November of that year. The Plan outlined a conceptual 58-mile, five-line citywide monorail system and proposed the Green Line as a first stand-alone monorail line. The ETC issued a programmatic Draft EIS under SEPA in April 2002 for its Plan, and in July 2002 released the final Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS. The Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS included an evaluation of the alternatives and significant environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the full citywide plan as well as from alternative routes for the Green Line.

The Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS evaluated two alternatives for the citywide plan: (1) the five-corridor route that was ultimately included in the Plan and that included three north/south

corridors and two east/west corridors; and (2) an alternative citywide plan that included two north/south corridors and two east/west corridors and determined that the first corridor to be implemented should be the Green Line:

- **Green Line:** *West Seattle–Downtown–Ballard.* This corridor would extend from Ballard and West Seattle to Downtown. A route along this corridor, the Green Line, would be developed first, as Phase I of the citywide monorail system. A route for the Green Line was adopted as part of the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan. (In the future, the Green Line could be extended from Ballard to the Northgate Transit Center and Lake City to the north and from West Seattle to the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal to the south.)

The citywide plan in the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan also included the following additional corridors, which were described at a conceptual level in the Plan:

- **Gold Line:** *Downtown–International District–Capitol Hill–University of Washington–Lake City.* This corridor could connect Downtown, the International District, and the University District along the east side of Capitol Hill. Connection hubs to transit service across Lake Washington to Bellevue and Kirkland via SR 520 or future ferry service could be provided. This corridor could connect to Lake City, allowing for linkages to out-of-city systems to the northeast.
- **Purple Line:** *Shilshole Marina–Magnuson Park.* This corridor could provide a North Seattle east/west route linking Ballard, Fremont, Wallingford, the University District, and Sand Point. It could link to north/south corridors along the way and provide connections between recreational venues, employment centers, the University of Washington, medical services, and neighborhoods.
- **Blue Line:** *Northgate–Greenwood–Downtown–SODO–South Park–Georgetown.* This corridor could serve Fremont, Phinney Ridge, and Greenwood with a connection to Northgate. It could connect through Downtown to SODO, South Park, and Georgetown. This corridor could provide future links to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and other destinations to the south.
- **Red Line:** *South Park–Sound Transit.* This corridor could provide a South Seattle east/west route linking the monorail's Blue Line corridor in the South Park neighborhood with Sound Transit's commuter and light rail lines, offering a cross-town connection to passengers in Southeast Seattle.

The Green Line corridor was selected in the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan to be the first monorail line to be built following an extensive public consultation process and further analysis of transit and transportation options for the five potential monorail corridors. The Green Line was identified as a corridor that could serve not only Downtown Seattle but also a number of other key, high-traffic destinations including the stadiums, Seattle Center, Key Arena, Pike Place Market, the ferry terminal, and the intermodal transit hub at King Street Station. In addition, the Green Line could serve two residential communities, Ballard and West Seattle, that depend on increasingly congested bridge connections to the Downtown core and which, in the case of West Seattle, could face significant congestion impacts from earthquake-related improvements to a key roadway, the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

For its evaluation of a potential monorail route along the Green Line corridor, the ETC's Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS evaluated a number of route alternatives within the corridor. From north to south, the major route alternatives examined during 2002 included:

- **Ballard:** A *West Alternative* route following 15th Avenue NW with a Ship Canal crossing near the existing Ballard Bridge; and an *East Alternative* route, following 15th Avenue NW to NW 65th Street, then following city streets southeast toward a Ship Canal crossing near the existing Aurora Bridge.

- **Interbay/Queen Anne/Seattle Center:** A *West Alternative* route following 15th Avenue W and Elliott Avenue W to W Harrison Street and First Avenue N; and an *East Alternative* route following Dexter Avenue N to Boren Avenue.
- **Downtown:** A *West Alternative* route along Second Avenue from Denny Way to the Second Avenue extension to Fourth Avenue S/S King Street; an *East Alternative* route along the eastern edge of Downtown, following Denny Way to Boren Avenue N, Boren Avenue to Rainier Avenue S, and then to S Dearborn Street to Third Avenue S. Among several other subroute options examined were routes along Elliott Avenue to Alaskan Way; a route along Fifth Avenue from Denny to Stewart, a route along Seventh Avenue from Denny to Westlake; a route along Fourth Avenue from Westlake to Yesler, and east/west transitions from Fifth Avenue and Lenora to Second Avenue, and from Fifth Avenue and Stewart to Second Avenue.
- **SODO:** A *West Alternative* following Fourth Avenue S to Third Avenue S to S Spokane Street; and an *East Alternative* following Third Avenue S to S Spokane Street. Other subroutes evaluated included First Avenue S, Second Avenue S, and east/west transitions from Third Avenue S to First Avenue S via S Royal Brougham Way or S Lander Street.
- **West Seattle:** A *West Alternative* following SW Admiral Way to California Avenue SW, and California Avenue SW to SW Alaska Street; and an *East Alternative* following SW Avalon Way and Fauntleroy Way SW to SW Morgan Street or SW Alaska Street to California Avenue SW to SW Morgan Street. The EIS also examined a subroute from SW Alaska Street at Avalon Way to California Avenue SW and then south to SW Morgan Street.

More detail on the alternative stations, routes, Operations Center, and operating requirement assumptions used for the analysis of the Green Line route alternatives is documented in the Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS. That EIS also describes the environmental impacts that were considered in the development of the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan and evaluates the Green Line.

In November 2002, Seattle voters approved Seattle Citizens' Petition No. 1, which provided funding for a \$1.75 billion, 14-mile Green Line as described in the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan. Funding for the Green Line also includes planning activities for a potential second monorail phase. All funding for design and construction of future monorail phases must be submitted to Seattle voters for approval. Future phases are not the subject of this Green Line EIS, which focuses specifically on alternatives to build and operate the Green Line, although these phases are discussed in Section 4.16, Cumulative Impacts. The Green Line has been proposed as an independent, stand-alone transit system that would serve tens of thousands of passengers a day and provide service to key Seattle destinations and communities, as well as connections to a variety of transit modes, including bus, light rail, commuter rail, ferry, bike, foot, and auto. Although the Green Line is envisioned as part of what would ultimately become a citywide monorail system, it would function independently of other potential future monorail lines and as such is not dependent on future decisions to propose or fund a second or subsequent phase of the monorail system.

2.4 PROJECT PROPONENT

SMP is charged with building, owning, operating, and maintaining a citywide monorail system. SMP is an independent city transportation authority authorized under state law (RCW Ch. 35.95A) and created by Seattle voters' approval of Petition No. 1 in November 2002. SMP is governed by a nine member Board of Directors, led by an Executive Director, and supported by staff, technical consultants, and volunteers.

SMP is distinct from the ETC, which prepared the Seattle Popular Monorail Plan and the Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS. The purpose of the ETC was to implement Initiatives 41 and 53 on

behalf of the citizens of Seattle. The ETC was dissolved, however, by the City of Seattle on June 9, 2003, pursuant to a request via Resolution 03-01 by the ETC Board.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

SMP, as the SEPA lead agency, and the U. S. Coast Guard, as the NEPA lead agency, have agreed to prepare this joint EIS to satisfy the requirements of SEPA and NEPA. The Green Line EIS scoping process under SEPA began with publication of the Determination of Significance (DS) and Notice of Intent (NOI) on January 6, 2003. To initiate this process, SMP mailed information about the project, EIS, and scoping process to over 110,000 residences and businesses within ½ mile of the Green Line route, as well as to public officials, agencies, community organizations, and public libraries. Notice was also published in the *Seattle Times*, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the *Daily Journal of Commerce*, and a number of community and local newspapers. During the EIS scoping process, six public scoping community workshops were held at the locations and dates below:

- January 21, West Seattle (West Seattle High School)
- January 22, Downtown/Pioneer Square (Benaroya Hall)
- January 23 Ballard (Nordic Heritage Museum)
- January 28 Seattle Center/Queen Anne/Belltown (Seattle Center Northwest Rooms)
- January 29 SODO (Seahawks Stadium)
- January 30 Interbay/Magnolia (The Mountaineers)

In addition, SMP hosted an agency scoping meeting on February 3, 2003, to which agencies including the City of Seattle, Sound Transit, WSDOT, King County and federal and state agencies and Tribal governments were invited to attend.

In March 2003, the U. S. Coast Guard, as the NEPA lead agency, initiated the scoping process under NEPA with a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS (March 25, 2003 68 FR 14422-02). A NEPA scoping meeting was held on April 9, 2003. An additional series of agency meetings was conducted during the initial public scoping period, and public comments were invited. All comments received were submitted to both SMP and the U. S. Coast Guard.

SMP is preparing the Green Line EIS under the phased environmental review provisions of SEPA, although this is a stand-alone NEPA document. The Seattle Popular Transit Plan Programmatic EIS provided environmental review for the citywide plan, including the selection of the Green Line as the first monorail corridor to be implemented, and evaluated route and station vicinity alternatives for the Green Line.

A Draft EIS on the SMP Green Line was prepared following the scoping period. Notice of Availability of the Green Line Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2003. The Green Line Draft EIS evaluated a defined project-level proposal for the Green Line, including a detailed analysis of the alignments, stations, and related facilities proposed to be built and operated. A 45-day comment period ran from August 29 to October 14, 2003 and a public hearing was held on September 29, 2003 at the Seattle Center Northwest Rooms. Written and oral comments were received from individuals; community groups; institutions; non-profit organizations; businesses; the City of Seattle; and federal, state, regional, and local agencies during the comment period. A summary of the comments is provided in Chapter 6. Volumes Five and Six include a copy of each of the comment letters, emails, and the hearing transcript followed by responses to each of the comments.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally rates Draft Environmental Impact Statements as part of its responsibilities under NEPA and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. EPA gave the Green Line Draft EIS its highest rating, “Lack of Objections.” EPA’s letter and rating system is included at the start of this volume. EPA stated, “[w]e strongly support the project purpose and need to provide a safe and reliable mass transit alternative to travel on congested city streets and highways and to better link the Seattle neighborhoods through which the proposed monorail passes.”

SEPA provisions encourage Growth Management Act (GMA) cities such as Seattle to integrate planning, environmental, and project review (RCW 43.21C.240 and WAC 197-11-158). Consistent with these provisions, the City of Seattle, when it reviews future Green Line project applications, may consider the extent to which probable significant adverse impacts could be mitigated by its adopted Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, and other applicable governmental regulations. Although SMP is the SEPA lead agency for this document, other state and local permitting agencies will also rely on and use this EIS.

The Green Line would include crossings of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Duwamish Waterway, both navigable waterways under Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403; Chapter 425, March 3, 1899; 30 Stat. 1151), commonly known as the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. The Act requires federal approval for the construction of any bridge, dam, dike, or causeway over or in navigable waterways of the United States. Permitting and approvals for bridges under Section 9 has been delegated to the U. S. Coast Guard, an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security.

The U. S. Coast Guard, in reviewing the Green Line’s proposed water crossings, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and related regulations and directives implementing NEPA. The Coast Guard’s NEPA jurisdiction is not limited to bridge or navigation issues, but also extends beyond the bridge and its approaches to include primary and secondary impacts of the proposed Green Line. In order to fully consider the secondary and cumulative impacts of the proposed bridge permit, the scope of the U. S. Coast Guard’s NEPA review has been determined to be the entire 14-mile proposed Green Line. The U.S. Coast Guard’s review also includes compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations including the National Historic Preservation Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act, the Executive Order for Environmental Justice, and others. The anticipated federal permits and approvals that apply to the Green Line are identified in the EIS fact sheet, and further discussed in the applicable environmental impact analysis sections.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 transferred the U. S. Coast Guard from the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This transfer became effective on March 1, 2003. Prior to passage of the Homeland Security Act, the Coast Guard’s bridge permit program had been a DOT program. As a DOT agency, the Coast Guard was responsible for implementing Section 4(f) of the Transportation Act of 1966, which requires DOT agencies to perform a particular type of alternatives analysis for transportation projects that use any land from a public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any historic site. Since the Coast Guard is no longer a DOT agency, a Section 4(f) analysis is not required for Coast Guard bridge permit actions. The Coast Guard will, nevertheless, ensure project environmental impacts on these resources are identified and assessed in the EIS, and appropriately considered before any final agency action on the project is taken.

2.5.1 Regional Planning Context

Governments and public agencies throughout the Puget Sound region have developed a number of plans over the last 15 years to address land use and transportation needs both within Seattle and around the

region. As noted above, a finding of need for a new form of intermediate-capacity transit within specific corridors was made by the City of Seattle. This finding was informed by a number of other evaluations of transportation needs, which included:

- **Vision 2020**, prepared by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), was adopted in 1995 and amended in 1996. It is an integrated land use, economic, transportation, and growth management strategy that includes the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, as required for federal funding for regional transportation improvements. *Vision 2020* proposes a regional growth management strategy that includes identifying and maintaining urban growth areas, supporting compact communities, focusing growth in designated urban centers, and redeveloping urban transportation corridors. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which was updated in 2001 and is now called *Destination 2030* (see below), calls for a regional rapid transit system with local Seattle connections. The regional system would support higher densities, policies, and facilities to promote high-occupancy vehicle use and discourage the use of single-occupant vehicles.
- **Destination 2030**, which was adopted in 2001, serves as the Regional Transportation Plan required by state law and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan required by federal law. The plan provides guidance for major capacity investment decisions that are proposed to address regional transportation system needs. The PSRC developed a course to improve the transportation system to meet anticipated growth with systems and policies to support it. *Destination 2030* contains policies aimed at improving mobility and access and defines both short- and long-term transportation strategies and investment to improve the region's transportation system. The voter-approved Seattle Popular Monorail Plan has been incorporated into *Destination 2030* as a form of in-city, intermediate-capacity transit that would help meet the region's mobility needs.

The Project has recently been included in PSRC's 2003 Air Quality Amendment, which satisfies all state and federal (TEA-21) requirements for consistency with the adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan, *Destination 2030*, and has been approved by FHWA and FTA.

- **Intermediate Capacity Transit Study**, which, as noted above, was prepared by the City of Seattle, examined possible transit solutions that could provide greater passenger-carrying capacity and reliability than buses operating in mixed traffic. Intermediate-capacity service would connect neighborhoods, major destinations, and transit transfer stations. The study evaluated bus rapid transit, streetcars and trams, and elevated transit on a total of 47 potential routes, from which five corridors were identified as feasible for intermediate-capacity transit where new modes of transit could provide greater passenger-carrying capacity and reliability than buses operating in mixed traffic.

2.5.2 Next Steps

Following the issuance of this Green Line Final EIS, the SMP Board of Directors will determine an alignment and station locations and types for the Green Line, which will be proposed to the Seattle City Council for incorporation into its Transitway Agreement for the Green Line. Corridor and design hearings on the recommended alignment will be held before the SMP Board selects a final alignment.

After issuance of Notice of Final EIS availability in the Federal Register, the U.S. Coast Guard will begin consideration of the SMP's permit applications.